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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN: SDPT LEADER QUESTIONED BY GENERAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

11. (U) Chairman of the Socialist Democratic Party of Tajikistan (SDPT), Rahmatullo Zoyirov, was questioned four times by the General Prosecutor's office. Zoyirov told PolOff the General Prosecutor's office summoned him repeatedly to interrogate him on his recent statement claiming Tajikistan's government detained up to 1,000 political prisoners. Zoyirov includes Hizb ut-Tahrir members in the figure. The General Prosecutor's office threatened to arrest him if he could not back-up his claim. Zoyirov said his party was simply researching the issue of political prisoners.

12. (SBU) During the questioning, the General Prosecutor's office accused him of being a Hizb ut-Tahrir leader and tried to extract a confession from him. Admittedly, Zoyirov, one of Tajikistan's preeminent lawyers has defended convicted Hizb ut-Tahrir members in the past. The General Prosecutor's office said that imprisoned Hizb ut-Tahrir members signed statements saying Zoyirov was a Hizb ut-Tahrir leader. The interrogators also pegged him to be an Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan member, a connection they made because of his ethnic Uzbek origins. Zoyirov adamantly rejected that he is a member of any terrorist organization. On May 12, the deputy general prosecutor called Zoyirov in for the last meeting and told him they would not press charges.

13. (SBU) COMMENT: Zoyirov and the SDPT are not a political threat to incumbent President Rahmonov in the November presidential election, so it is unclear why the government would target Zoyirov. It may be because he has been more outspoken of late, including regarding the arrest of Democratic Party Leader Iskandarov, and the authorities wanted to send a message. Or they genuinely think he has stronger ties to Hizb ut-Tahrir than his legal connection. Post does not have any evidence to indicate Zoyirov is a member of Hiz but-Tahrir or IMU. Zoyirov

is confident the government has no basis to push legitimate charges against him. However, he still believes they could use any excuse to arrest him. Still, the Government has a history of taking strong measures against perceived opponents once they decide to take action. END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND